

Current major event

The Earthquake situation in Syria

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Türkiye and Syria in the early morning of 6 February 2023. The epicenter was identified as Gaziantep near the Türkiye-Syria border. Thousands of aftershocks were documented, including a 6.4 aftershock on 20 February 2023.

Editorial note

As of 03 March, the Syrian Ministry of Health (MoH) had reported 1,414 deaths and 2,357 injuries in Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous governorates. In Northwest Syria, as of 3 March, 5,900 deaths were reported and 11,200 injured. The most affected areas are Harim and Salqin in Idlib Governorate and Afrin in Aleppo governorate, where the highest number of deaths has been recorded.

In Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, and other affected areas, governmental authorities reported that at least 714 buildings were destroyed with hundreds more severely damaged. In Northwest Syria, over 1,700 buildings were destroyed and more than 8,500 buildings severely damaged.

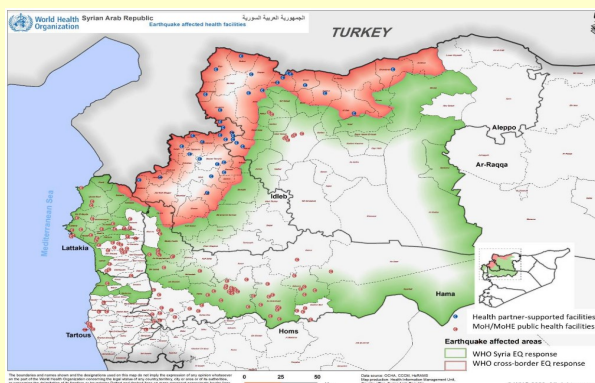
Overall, more than 363,000 persons have been displaced, including at least 90,000 people who have fled their homes in Northwest Syria. Further displacements are still being recorded in the affected areas. Many displaced people are housed in make shift shelters. Essential services including shelter, food, water, hygiene and sanitation, and health are critically needed. There were already three on-going disease outbreaks in the earthquake-affected areas: cholera (all affected governorates, especially Aleppo and Idlib), Hepatitis A (Latakia), and measles.

A total of 182 health facilities have been damaged, with two completely destroyed, including 55 health facilities in Northwest Syria (See table). In Aleppo, Hama and Latakia collectively, 46 hospitals and 147 PHC centers have been damaged. Additionally, health services in 33 PHC centers and nine hospitals were disrupted by the earthquake.

Syria was already experiencing a protracted crisis due to armed conflict and socio-economic decline that had resulted in a severe deterioration of living conditions. The disrupted health system was overstretched due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an ongoing cholera outbreak and 12 years of war. Nearly a quarter of all hospitals and one third of all primary health care centres were non-functional and unable to respond to the growing health needs. Health workers who have been involved in the immediate response, have been impacted by the collapse of their homes, schools and hospitals, and the deaths of family and loved ones. At least 13 health care workers in Syria have died.

WHO's goal is to save lives in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, to mitigate downstream health consequences, including

Distribution of public health facilities in earthquake affected areas according to HeRAMS Syria.



Whole of Syria situation

- Injuries: 11, 200+
- Deaths: 5900+
- Affected population: 8.8 million
- Displaced: 453,000+
- Health facilities damaged: 182

negative impacts on mental health and wellbeing, and to rapidly restore essential health services and public health functions across all earthquake-affected populations.

WHO is focused on the following priorities: Preparing for secondary effects of the earthquake (disease outbreaks, mental health needs, exacerbation of existing health conditions, and malnutrition); ensuring access to safe and sufficient water and sanitation as well as reinforcement of disease prevention, surveillance and response activities in reception centres and amongst displaced populations; detailed needs and damage assessments to define continued targeted support, and to drive the rehabilitation of damaged health facilities in Whole of Syria.

WHO is also focusing on supporting activities to ensure access to health services – e.g. establishing Mobile Medical Teams (MMTs) and health posts, continued expansion of primary and secondary health care services to earthquake-affected populations, including rehabilitative services for trauma patients; expanding mental health and psychosocial support to communities and individuals, including targeted interventions for the health workforce; full resumption of routine immunization in all affected areas, and expanded cholera vaccination in Northwest Syria; defining needs for supplies and providing essential medical equipment across all affected areas of Syria, particularly materials and devices such as CT scans, MRIs, and X-rays that are essential for trauma and surgical care and diagnosis.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2023

Afghanistan	[209 394 (7879), 3.8%]
Bahrain	[696 614 (1536), 0.2%]
Djibouti	[15 690 (189), 1.2%]
Egypt	[515 792 (24 815), 4.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[7 569 769 (144 878) 1.9%]
Iraq	[2 465 545 (25 375), 1%]
Jordan	[1 746 997 (14 122), 0.8%]
Kuwait	[663 859 (2570), 0.4%]
Lebanon	[1 232 402 (10 837), 0.9%]
Libya	[507 187 (6437), 1.3%]
Morocco	[1 272 486 (16 296), 1.3%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[703 228 (5708), 0.8%]
Oman	[399 449 (4628), 1.2%]
Pakistan	[1 577 163 (30 643), 1.9%]
Qatar	[494 377 (687), 0.1%]
Saudi Arabia	[829 730 (9617) 1.2%]
Somalia	[27 324 (1361), 5%]
Sudan	[63 829 (5017), 7.9%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[57 423 (3163), 5.5%]
Tunisia	[1 151 126 (29 341), 2.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[1 052 519 (2349), 0.2%]
Yemen	[11 945 (2159), 18.1%]